

Mayor Scott Avedisian announced today that employees of the Warwick Sewer Authority (WSA) are once again the recipients of awards for excellence in wastewater treatment. At its annual awards banquet on Friday, May 8 at the Cranston Country Club, the Narragansett Water Pollution Control Association (NWPCA) recognized the WSA for its demonstrated outstanding commitment to employee safety. WSA staffer John Hannon received the Collections System Operator of the Year Award.

WSA received the A. Joseph Mattera Award for its safety program, which is spearheaded by Assistant Superintendent Patrick Doyle. Doyle leads WSA's Safety Committee and is responsible for WSA's safety program and safety training for all employees. WSA had no "loss time" injuries in 2008, a direct result of Doyle's efforts.

John Hannon was recognized for his outstanding contributions to advancing wastewater collection systems knowledge. He was nominated by his supervisor, James E. Feeney III, WSA's Program Manager. According to Feeney, Hannon has single-handedly inspected a remarkable 16 miles of sewers within the City since the WSA purchased a closed-circuit television (CCTV) sewer line inspection system in July 2007. As a result of Mr. Hannon's efforts, WSA identified and was able to eliminate numerous problems in the collection system, including cracked pipes that allowed clean groundwater into the sewer system (which not only taxes the capacity of the sewer lines but then has to be processed at the wastewater facility).

Feeney estimated that Hannon was crucial in eliminating over 160,000 gallons per day of "infiltration." Hannon, who has voluntarily obtained the highest level of collections system operator certification from the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, appeared on the cover of a national publication, Municipal Sewer & Water magazine, in September 2008, which highlighted the City of Warwick's efforts to improve the management and maintenance of its sewer collection system.

Executive Director Janine Burke said her entire staff is deserving of recognition, but that Doyle and Hannon have gone "above and beyond the call of duty time after time after time." Burke has nominated Doyle for the New England Water Environment Association's Operator Safety Award for 2009. In her nomination, she says that Assistant Superintendent Doyle always thinks about safety and has been successful in establishing a "safety culture" at WSA, even during tough budgetary times when everyone is looking to save money. Instead, Mr. Doyle has looked to collaborate with the Fire Department, the Police Department, WSA's insurance carrier and other agencies as a way of doing more with less.

"As a result of all of Mr. Doyle's efforts, WSA workers are safer today than they have been in the past and WSA management can be confident that WSA is in compliance with worker-safety regulations," Burke added.

These honors for the WSA come on the heels of two other awards that it received in January: Gwinlin Cox, Jr. was named 2008 Rhode Island Operator of the Year by the New England Water Environment Association, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that the Sewer Authority was selected as a 2008 Regional EPA Wastewater Treatment Plant Excellence Award recipient.

Other NWPCA award winners for performance in 2008 honored Friday night include:

Most efficient small secondary wastewater treatment plant -- Town of New Shoreham Wastewater Treatment Facility

Most efficient medium secondary wastewater treatment plant -- Quonset Development Corporation Wastewater Treatment Facility

Most efficient large secondary wastewater treatment plant -- City of Newport Wastewater Treatment Facility (Operated by United Water)

Most efficient small advanced wastewater treatment plant -- Town of Smithfield (Operated by Veolia Water)

Most efficient large advanced wastewater treatment plant -- Town of West Warwick Wastewater Treatment Facility

Small Facility Safety Award -- Smithfield Wastewater Treatment Facility (Operated by Veolia Water)

James Marvelle Award For demonstrated leadership excellence as an active and contributing member of NWPCA -- Bernard Bishop, Town of South Kingstown

Robert J. Markelewicz Award For outstanding contributions to wastewater treatment system maintenance -- Robert Banes, Town of West Warwick